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NEWS RELEASE

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ROCKLIN WOMAN DUBBED “THE GRANDMA BANK ROBBER” PLEADS GUILTY TO ARMED BANK ROBBERY AND TO DEFRAUDING HER FORMER EMPLOYER

SACRAMENTO—United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that VALERIE HARRIS, 50, of Rocklin, California, pleaded guilty on Monday, March 24, 2008, to a single count of armed bank robbery and six counts of bank fraud before United States District Court Judge Frank C. Damrell, Jr.

The case is being investigated by the Sacramento Violent Crimes Task Force, which includes the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Roseville Police Department, and the Sacramento County Sheriff's Office. During the early stages of the investigation, the task force dubbed the perpetrator “The Grandma Bank Robber” because surveillance photos depicted the robber to be between her early 50s to early 60s.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Michelle Rodriguez, who is prosecuting the case, HARRIS admitted in federal court that she used and carried a “Colt 454 Cowboy Style Pistol” during commission of her bank robbery on December 12, 2007. HARRIS brandished the pistol to a victim teller at the U.S. Bank located inside of a Safeway grocery store at 989 Sunrise Avenue, Roseville, California at approx. 6:00 p.m. HARRIS was arrested on December 18, 2007 after law enforcement received a tip that HARRIS attempted to pay a debt with bank robbery loot. During the course of the armed bank robbery investigation, the FBI uncovered additional fraud crimes committed by HARRIS. As a result, HARRIS also pleaded guilty to executing a fraudulent scheme to defraud Bank of America by cashing stolen and forged checks. Harris admitted her bank fraud scheme began in December 2004 and continued to May 2005. Harris stole remittance checks from her employer, a company providing medical services in Sacramento, and then she altered, forged, and stole the proceeds by negotiating the checks. HARRIS used the proceeds—nearly \$40,000—to obtain cash and to pay personal debt.

HARRIS faces up to 25 years in federal prison for her armed robbery of the U.S. Bank on December 12, 2007. For each bank fraud charge, HARRIS faces up to 30 years federal prison. Penalties for each count also include up to five years of supervised release and a fine. The actual sentence, however, will be determined at the discretion of the court after consideration of the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of variables and any applicable statutory sentencing factors. Harris remains in federal custody awaiting sentencing on June 2, 2008.

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